

FINALISTS OF THE 2025 MICHIF YOUTH ART CONTEST

SHAE FRASER



The ocean has always been a big part of my life- I'll always gravitate back to the salt, no matter how far I roam. The British Columbian coast is home to some of the creatures most beloved to me. One of those creatures being the giant Pacific octopus.

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For a long time, the giant Pacific octopus has appeared in my dreams. I for one, can't explain what it might mean, but it is the inspiration for the location of this piece. Not quite sea, not quite sky. The stars were given an almost deep sea, bioluminescent quality to further bridge the gap between the ocean floor and the nighttime dreaming. Octopods are intelligent and have the amazing ability to remember human faces. How amusing is the thought that there might be a giant Pacific octopus out there who had dreamt of me as well? She'd recognize me and I would recognize her if we were to ever meet. If octopods can dream, that is.

Life is art and art mimics life. Like the ends of the sash bend and coil, so too does the arm of the octopus. As if they are both reflections of the same being, both imbued with the same life from Creator. The Metis individual pulls a star from their fire bag (also known as an octopus bag), and the giant Pacific presents her own. The two of them are worlds apart in both language and physiology- and yet they share a moment together as two beings in the same dream, under the same stars.

What does this 8-legged, blue-blooded, benthic angel have to teach us about the natural world? She is fully in tune with her surroundings: she can change shades and textures perfectly even while being colour blind. The 3 distinct cellular layers that make up her skin allow her to fully blend into the world around her. One could say the cephalopod invites us to enmesh ourselves within our environments- instead of bending our environment to suit ourselves. For me, that is a core tenet of being indigenous: existing in tandem with the natural world, not separate from it.